so far; indicating the number of casualties involved and the compensation paid to victims and their relatives?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ) : (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. On 14.5.1996, at 13.25 hrs. PP-4 Kayankulam-Emakulam Passenger train dashed against a Bus at unmaned level crossing between Haripad and Kayankulam stations of Trivandrum division of Southern Railway. The accident occurred due to negligence on the part of driver of Bus who tried to cross the level crossing in the face of approaching train.

(c) The following arrangements exist at the unmanned level crossing in question to avert such accidents:—

i) Road signs are provided on the both sides at unmanned level crossing to warn road users.

ii) Speed breakers are provided to check the speed of road vehicles approaching towards the level crossing.

iii) Whistle Boards are provided on the both sides alongside the track to enable the trains driver to whistle and in this case the engine driver sounded the Whistle/Hom continously while crossing the level crossing.

iv) The level crossing is on the straight and its visibility was quite clear.

(d) The comparative figures of level crossing accidents on Southern Railway during 1994, 1995 and 1996 and casualties involved therein are as under:—

i) Year	No. of level crossing
1994 1995	13
1996(UptoJune'96)	21
	6

ii) Year	Killed	Grievous injury	Minor injury
1994 1995	17	5	9
1996	17	5	16
(Upto June'96)	42	13	5

No compensation is paid to the victims in case of unmanned level crossing accidents.

Project report of the Cogentrix Power Project

638. SHRI VAYALAR RAVI : Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government have examined the project report of the Cogentrix Power Project in Kamataka;

(b) if so, the objection raised in the examination report;

(c) whether Government have cleared the project; and

(d) if so, the reasons for withdrawing the objections and the date of clearance given to the project?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (CAPT. JAI NARAIN PRASAD NISHAD) : (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The Report Environmental Impact Assessment Report for the proposed 1000 MW Thermal Power Project at Nandikur, Karnataka by M/s. Magalore Power Company was examined by the Expert Committee for Thermal Power Project constituted by the Ministry. Clarifications were sougth on use of sea water for cooling, installation of flue gas desulphurisation plant Tor control of sulphurdioxide emissions, so as to minimise adverse impact on the Western Ghats, rehabilitation of project affected persons, coal transportation, fly ash utilisation and thermal discharges into the sea, etc.

(c) and (d) Having satisfied itself with the proposed environmental safeguards to be provided in the project, the Committee recommenbed clearance for the project. The project was accorded environmental clearance on 11th June, 1996 stipulating various mitigative measures required for environmental protection.

Drought in Kachh Saurashtra Region

639. SHRI GOPALSINH G. SOLANKI: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether scarcity conditions still prevail in many areas affected by drought in Kachh Saurashtra region;

(b) if so, the areas declared as drought hit in Kachh Saurashtra region;

(c) the number of talukas so far covered under the DPAR and the number proposed to be covered during 1996-97; and

(d) the nature of assistance given so far or porposed to be given by the Government to mitigate the sufferings of the people?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRICHATURANAN MISHRA): (a) and (b) According to the infomration received from the Government of Gujarat, the State Government had declared 625 villages in 12Talukas affected by scarcity and 3365 villages in 61 Talukas affected by semi-scarcity conditions in the Kachh-Saurashtra region, due to inadequate rains during last year. However, it is reported that rains have now been received in these areas.

(c) 52 Blocks in 10 districts of Gujarat are covered under the Drought Prone Areas Programme (DPAP). From 1995-96, area development under DPAP has been taken up on watershed basis. 469 watershed projects are to be completed upto 1998-99 under the Programme. The Central Government has allocated Rs. 1,545 lakhs for this Programme in 1996-97.

(d) Government of India have released two instalments of Calamity Relief Fund (CRF) for 1996-97 amounting to Rs. 52.35 crores to enable the State Government to undertake necessary relief measures in the affected areas.

Rise in the Prices of Agricultural Inputs

640. SHRI IQBAL SINGH : Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) the percentage of rise in prices of agricultural inputs during the year 1995-96;

(b) the percentage of rise in the support price of foodgrains during this period;

(c) the percentage of rise in the production of these foodgrains during this period; and

(d) the steps being taken by Government to control the price-rise in the agricultural inputs?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI CHATURANAN MISHRA): (a)The rise in the prices of agricultural inputs during the year 1995-96 has been provisionally estimated as 4.0%.

(b) The Minimum support prices of foodgrains during 1995-96 have been raised by 6.1%.

(c) The production of foodgrains during 1995-96 is likely to show a marginal decline of 0.4% over the previous year.

(d) The Government has been controlling the prices of certain agricultural inputs falling under the administered price regime like some of the fertilizers, canal irrigation, electricity, diesel and other petroleum products. The Government has also been taking steps to supply, at reasonable prices, some of the other inputs like certified seeds, plant protection chemicals and agricultural implements & machinery. The Government has recently enhanced the rates of concession on phosphatic and potassic fertilizers.

Direct Train from Delhi to Kotdwara

641. SHRI RAJ NATH SINGH:
SHRIMATIMALTI SHARMA:
Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have taken any action on the proposal submitted by the Members of Parliament recently for introduction of direct train service for the people of hill districts of U.P. from Delhi to Kotdwara;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) by when the said places would be connected by direct train service; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ): (a) to (d) Direct travel facility between Delhi and Kotdwara is already available in the form of 5 (five) through coaches (1 Sleeper, 3 Unreserved Ilnd Class and 1 First-cum-Second class) running by 4041/4042 Mussorie Express and 1KN/8KN Passengers with detaching/attaching of coaches at Najibabad. The Railways are examining the feasibility of reducing the lieover period of coaches at Najibabad by changing the timings of the connecting Kotdwara-Najibabad passengers.